

Lafayette Historical Society

Newsletter

P.O. Box 133 . Lafayette, California 94549

President: William Wakeman (283-3908)
Editor: Shirley Thomson (284-2995), Sue Cross (284-9594)

Vol. 22, No. 1
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President's Message

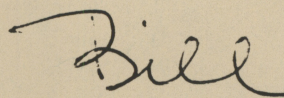
Surprise! Surprise! This will be the second Newsletter in one month. Why? The Newsletter staff started the last one in January expecting to go to press in February at the latest. But the fates were against us and we didn't make it. Now the Society must publish another so that you are fully informed about the annual meeting coming up on Tuesday, May 10.

Correction: the centennial celebration of the Wayside Inn has been postponed from May until October 9. This will give more time to make a big event.

As I said in the last issue of the Newsletter, the Historical Society needs lots of help in the areas enumerated at that time (walking tours, archives, Wayside Inn celebration, the house tour committee, Lafayette's 150th anniversary of settlement) and with the latest events we need even more help. Shirley Thomson has been the editor on the Newsletter for ten years and wants to retire so she can devote more time to publishing books. We receive newsletters from all over the county and hers is the best. Someone please volunteer. Remember, Shirley is only a phone call away.

At the annual meeting the Society will elect four board members for three-year terms. I am one of those nominated. On June 14, 1994, we will hold a board meeting to select the officers for the next year. I have been president for three years and would like to shed myself of that duty. I'll continue to do historical research, historical walks and talks to various groups. I enjoy that part of the work; once you've done the research, you want to tell others about it.

Sincerely,



William Wakeman

PS: On April 19, 1994, Ruth Dyer, Marechal Duncan, and I attended a workshop for a graduate student project to landscape Plaza Park and the surrounding area. Others attending were members of various city commissions. We were divided into three groups and each group presented ideas on how the park and environs should be reworked—while considering traffic, parking, etc. The results were interesting. All three groups suggested that the old buildings on Plaza Way should be refronted as they were in the late 1800s, that there should be more color (as in flowering annuals and wildflowers). When we suggested that the statue be relocated, the other groups agreed. Many were unaware that the original plans for the statue of General Lafayette called for its eventual location in Bedford's City Center, when the center is completed. The General's stay in the plaza was to be only temporary.

If you are willing to help with plans for our upcoming house tour program, please contact Diddo Clark at 906-0966. She will meet you for a short committee caucus on the evening of the annual dinner meeting.

Nominating Committee Report

Four members' terms on the Board of Directors expire in June. Nominating Committee Chair Oliver Hamlin reports that Marechal Duncan, Sheila Piriano, Bill and Irma Somerton, and Bill Wakeman have accepted nomination to another term. Election will take place at the short business meeting to be conducted on May 10. >

Newsletter Editor Sought

With gratitude for all I've learned and for the wonderful people I've come to know while working on the Newsletter, this editor has decided it is time to move on—and time to leave this personally satisfying position to someone else. Naturally, I'll be happy to help new people get started.

My big project these days—for those who have asked—is a series of genealogical source books I'm working on with friend and co-author Bette Kot. *California Cemetery Inscription Sources: Print and Microform* is to be published this month, and we're nearing completion of a similar bibliography for Michigan.

Please call me (284-2995) or Bill Wakeman (283-3908) if you are interested in the Newsletter. —Ed., Shirley Thomson

Archives Aid

LHS Archivist Irma Somerton's phone number was incorrectly given in the recent appeal for help with our files. In the event some willing person was unable to reach her, they are encouraged to try again at 284-9785.

Two fine people have already volunteered to begin work with Irma. Thanks! >

Good Cooks with a History

A palate-pleasing project by Contra Costa County Historical Society is set to link good food and good history in a book to be available by Christmas. Chair of the Historical Cook Book Committee, Dolores Ricks, invites readers to submit recipes with personal and historical significance.

Call the History Center (939-9180) for further information. Deadline for submissions to the book is August 30. >

Board Meeting

Next meeting of LHS board members and committee chairs is June 8, at the home of Ruth Dyer. Please call Ruth (283-8312) to let her know if you expect to attend. Members welcome. >

1993-94 Officers and Committee Chairs

President	Bill Wakeman
Vice President	Marechal Duncan
Treasurer	Sheila Piriano
Recording Secretary	Ruth Dyer
Corresponding Secretary	Oliver Hamlin
Annual Potluck Dinner	Richard Johnson
.	Oliver Hamlin
Archives	Bill & Irma Somerton
Book Sales	Ruth Dyer
Fire Engine	George Wasson
Historical Displays	Bill and Irma Somerton
Landmarks	
Membership	Olliver Hamlin
Newsletter Editors	Shirley Thomson
.	Sue Cross
Newsletter Mailing	Frances Hunt
.	Ruby Sturman
Oral History	Ray Peters
.	Marechal Duncan
.	George Wasson
.	Nancy Flood
Plaza Park	Ray Peters
Program	
Publicity	Diddo Clark
Walking Tours	Collette Means
Without portfolio	Jop Van Overveen

Dues

Student membership	\$2.50
Family membership	\$10.00
Business membership	\$50.00
Life membership	\$100.00

A Poem

With thanks to Bob Kahn . . .

I have a spelling checker,
It came with my P.C.

It plainly marks four my revue
Mistakes I cannot sea.

I've run this poem threw it,
I'm sure your pleas too no,

Its letter perfect in it's weigh,
My checker tolled me sew.



— ANNUAL DINNER MEETING —

Tuesday, May 10, 1994

Civil War Re-enactment Program

6:00 Social Hour

7:00 Potluck Dinner

8:00 Program

Veterans Memorial Hall, Mt. Diablo Boulevard at First Street, Lafayette

Ed Lasell, guest

Please bring a dish of six to eight servings for each person attending.

Hearty salads, meat or seafood entrees, and side dishes are needed.

Please also bring your own serving utensils.

Board members will bring desserts. Dinner drinks will be provided.

For more information, call Oliver Hamlin (283-6822 days, 284-1446 eve.) or
Richard Johnson (283-0199).

Editor's note: Jennie Bickerstaff Rosenberg's 1956 talk before a Lafayette meeting of the Contra Costa Historical Society is continued here. The first half of Mrs. Rosenberg's review of Lafayette history was presented in the last issue of this publication.

Early Lafayette History, continued

by Jennie Bickerstaff Rosenberg

Did Elam Brown have children? Yes, he had four by Sarah Adams Brown, his first wife: Thomas, Warren, Laurence and a daughter, Margelina.

Thomas Brown was a very important man in our county and lived in Martinez. In 1850 he was elected County Clerk and Recorder and held that office until 1855, when he retired from that position and was elected Supervisor. He held that office for one year. He studied law and in 1860 was licensed to practice in the Supreme Court.

Then there was another, Warren Brown, who joined his father in the redwoods. In the fall of 1850 he was elected to the office of the County

"Jennie" continued on page 6...

Walking Tours

With the arrival of April Collette Means and Mary McCosker have geared up once again for a series of walking tours for Lafayette school-children. This year is a year of transition from fourth-grade to third-grade students; the local history program henceforth will be offered to the younger children. The 1994 program, then, has roughly twice the usual number of students, and they are led once again by a small but dedicated group of docents.

The youngsters are led through the heart of old Lafayette and introduced to a view of their community when it was a truly rural neighborhood. They also learn about a number of memorable pioneer personalities when they visit the Lafayette Cemetery.

The Society has recently acquired two "power horns," portable loudspeakers, to help the docents speak above the increasing level of road noise when conducting tours along Moraga Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

The Walking Tours team welcomes the help of a few more people in this good work. >

Life in Lafayette

in

Squire Brown's Time

The Contra Costa Gazette on mail service:

"With exception of the 12 mile line between Oakland and San Pablo, the only internal mail route in the county is that between Oakland and Martinez, via Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Alamo, Danville and Pacheco, with a time schedule which requires the mail to be carried through, each way, every day, Sundays excepted, leaving each end of the route at a specified hour...

"Our only interior mail line comes and goes as pleases the carriers, and the public can make no calculation on time... We give the contractor and his bondmen notice, however, that they may be called to account..."

An announcement in the Gazette:

"Coal Oil. -Messrs. Brown & Weil, at Lafayette, have for sale Hale's improved patent lamps, and kerosene or coal oil for burning therein. These articles are coming into very general use, and they especially recommend themselves for their cheapness and safety, and their brilliant steady light."

"Farmers Wishing to Improve Their Stock . . ."

"The Thorough-Bred Horse WAGONER will stand the present season at the stable of Elam Brown, in Lafayette, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays; and on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at the stable of H. Sanford, near the Walnut Creek House.

"Wagoner is a beautiful bright bay, 17 hands high; well proportioned limbs; heavy quarters, showing great power and action. He was brought from Kentucky, and represented to be of the celebrated Wagoner and Morgan stock, so well known and esteemed in that State for wagon and stage horses. Farmers wishing to improve their stock of horses in size...

"Terms: \$15 by the season; \$20 to insure a colt, and \$10 for single leap—the latter to be paid

The following items are from the extensive files of the Dorothy Mutnick collection at the Contra Costa County Historical Society. Our sincere thanks to the Society for allowing their use and to Ruth Dyer for bringing them to our attention.

The short pieces from the Contra Costa Gazette presented in combination with Squire Brown's recipes tell about the realities of country life before the turn of the century. -Ed.

at time of service. Great care will be taken to prevent accidents, but should any occur, the proprietor will not be responsible for the same.

"Persons wishing to bring mares from a distance, can have them pastured and good care taken of them, on reasonable terms. Elam Brown."

The Squire's Recipes

Three of Elam Brown's recipes are given here as they were recorded from the originals by Mrs. Mutnick—misspellings and all. Self-sufficient farm households had to make up many medicines as well as their "fens paint" and foodstuffs. The first recipe shown here is the Squire's treatment for "fever and ague," probably a form of influenza. The second recipe is for whitewash, and the third (found on the back fly-leaf of his mill account book) is a fruit drink recorded by our famous teetotaler.

A Cure for the Fever and Ague: Twenty grams of quinine, ten of Epecac, eight of Calomel made into 5 doses pills onse in 3 hours.

To Make White Wash: Half bushel unslacked lime slacked with boiling water covered during the process. Strain it and add a peck of salt, dissolve in warm water three pounds of ground rice boiled to a thin paste, put in boiling hot half lb. of powder spanish whiting and a lb. of clear glue dissolved in warm water mix and let it stand several dayes put it on with a brush as hot as posible. An other way recommended put in two double handfule of salt in each pale full of water and a double handfule of fine sand to make it like cream. Coloring matter can be added to peas the fancy.

Elderberry Drink:

2 quarts of Elderberry to
2 qarts of water
to each gallon ad 3-1/2 lb sugar
Boil 1/2 hour when cool a spoonful
East [yeast?]

Lafayette's

First Telephone Subscribers

The list that follows was provided in a letter from Miriam Wood of Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company of March 20, 1962, to Dorothy Mutnick in answer to her request for a list of first subscribers. The letter comes to us from Bill Wakeman and Ruth Dyer. It is in the Dorothy Mutnick Collection at Contra Costa County Historical Society.

Seeking to add some identifying information to the names on the list, we have tapped Bill Wakeman's memory data base and made notations in brackets beside some of the names. Readers are invited to write with further information about the families on the list.

Dear Mrs. Mutnick:

Here are Lafayette's first telephone subscribers at long last! They are taken from the March 1925 directory for Contra Costa County. The numbers range from a simple "9" to "32W" to "29-F-4". For the purposes of your historical research I only copied the early residents and their addresses, thinking this would be sufficient.

The exchange was established in March of 1924, but in the directory of that year I didn't see any subscriber listings. Since 1914, and possibly sooner, there had been agents who had single telephones where the local citizenry could place their calls—both local and long distance. These were most often to be found in groceries.

Some of these agents were Henry Heldorn, W. R. Wemmer, and Chris Schlanker. These commercial telephone arrangements were known as Toll Stations.

Lafayette Telephone Subscribers - 1925 (Mrs. G. Medan, Agent) [Medau?]

Biale, A., Happy Valley Road
Boyer, H. H., Tunnel Road
Brown, Forrest E., Happy Valley Rd.
Brown, Henry T., Moraga Rd.
Brown, O. E., Oakland Avenue
Bunker, Roy R., Happy Valley Rd. [Bought the old Bernal adobe site on Happy Valley]
Casso [Cosso], X. C., Happy Valley Rd. [Happy Valley Farms; Mr. Cosso was father of Louis, Joe, Jack, and John Cosso]



Crow, Henry S., Tunnel Rd.
Crowley, F. J., 1st Avenue
Dewing, Stephen, Tunnel Rd.
Garrett, M. M., Happy Valley Rd. ["Col." Garrett, builder of the Garrett Building, now Tourelle Cafe & Bar]
Gillman, S. L., Dewing Avenue
Green, John, Oakland Avenue
Hall, Agnes B., Tunnel Road
Hill, Joseph, Dewing Avenue
Hollenbeck, Barnett, Happy Valley Rd.
Howsen, G. W., Dewing Avenue
Keefe, E. P., Tunnel Road [Was one of California's earliest CHP officers]
Kenney, Jim, Tunnel Road
Lafayette School, Moraga Rd.
Martin, B. C., Happy Valley Rd.
McKie, Albert J. Moraga Rd.
McNeil, R. E., Commercial St. (grocer) [Owner, Pioneer Store]
McNeil, Stuart, Oakland Ave. [Son of R. E. McNeil; had a dairy on Lafayette Circle West]
McNeil, W. M., Commercial St. [Son of R. E. McNeil; was a builder]
Medan [Medau], G., Tunnel Rd. [Medau family owned the Wayside Inn; also had meat market, ice cream parlor]
Meredith, Geo. S., West Lafayette Station [Their house stands at east end of School Street across the trail]
Michant [Michaut], Roy, 3rd Street [Mrs. Michaut was the telephone operator; her son was night relief operator]
Middleton, G. C., Oakland Ave.
Mu Kuno, G., Happy Valley Rd. [Mukuno family?]
Oliveira, J. A., Moraga Rd.
Olson, L. A., Tunnel Rd.
Powell, Dr. Alvin, Moraga Rd. [Father of Mary Flanders Powell]
Rench, J. A., Tunnel Rd.
Sangmaster, Fred C., Dewing Ave
Schutt, August, Brook Street [Family of Amelia Schutt, Lafayette's postmistress; Dick Schutt was a CHP officer]
Starks, L. J., Tunnel Road [Owned grocery store and meat market at corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Laf. Circle East]
Thomas, Leonard H., Orchard Rd.
Thomason [Thomson?], Frank C., Tunnel Rd.
Thomason [Thomson?], Robert, Tunnel Rd.
Voelker, J. L., Dewing Ave.
Weldon, G. E., Tunnel Rd. [Their house with its tall eucalyptus trees stood just east of Flavio's Italian Restaurant in the BART block; it was later the site of Petar's Restaurant, torn down a few years ago.]
White, Margaret, Tunnel Rd.
Wilson, Mrs. P. J., Dewing Avenue
Wood, Walter T., Tunnel Rd.
Woolridge, Harry E., Moraga Rd. >>

"Jennie," continued from page 3

Surveyor. He also was elected sheriff of the county in 1869 and served until 1871. Warren bought five hundred and fifty acres adjoining that of his father on the east side of the Acalanes Rancho. He married Laura A. Hastings and as they had no children, they adopted a boy, Henry Hastings, who was known to us as Henry Brown. He married and they had four children, two girls and two boys. A daughter, Stella, is now Mrs. Millikin and lives in Happy Valley. Another daughter, Mrs. Wilkinson, lives on Wilkinson Lane in Lafayette. The boys, Chester and Lloyd, have both passed on.

Elam Brown's daughter, Margelina, married Napoleon Bonaparte Smith. Grandma Brown's son, Josiah Allen, helped my father build the two front rooms of our house in 1879. Our house is across the street from the "Happy Valley Inn" on Mt. Diablo Boulevard [Diablo Foods is now located on her home site].

Another son, Andrew Allen, came across the plains with the caravan and on the way his wife died and was buried in the state of Nevada. She left a daughter, Elizabeth Jane, now deceased. Elizabeth Jane married William McNeil and left a son, Robert, who later bought the Pioneer Store and is the Robert McNeil whom we know.

Mr. Allen had learned the saddler trade, and when he came to Lafayette he had a shop and made harness and saddles. Later on he lived in Walnut Creek and married the second time. His wife's name was Charlotte Maloney. We called her Aunt Charlotte, and Andrew Allen we called Uncle Andrew—so you see we had grandpas, grandmas, uncles and aunts all around us.

I would like to tell you a little about Nathaniel Jones. He married Betsy Allen, Grandma Brown's daughter. He came here in 1847 and in 1848 wanted to settle in this location. Grandfather Brown was willing to sell a tenth of his 3,328-9/10 acres, and so he sold him 372 acres for \$100. (That was a good deal, wasn't it?) Mr. Jones owned a hundred acres of valley land, 150 acres of tillable hill land and the balance, good grazing land. He had about five acres of choice fruit trees and around his house were locust trees, some of which are still standing. The seeds of the locust trees were brought to the state in 1846 by Major Stephen Cooper, and Mr. Jones planted them in the spring of 1848. He called his place "Locust Farm."

Mr. Jones held several important offices in the county, being the first sheriff, afterwards Public Administrator and Supervisor. By driving up Lower Happy Valley Road about a mile you will

see Locust Farm on your right. Nathaniel Jones is buried in Lafayette Cemetery.

This is the history of the beginning of our Lafayette Cemetery, but many changes have taken place since that time. For years there was no caretaker, and several times fire swept over the cemetery because of dry weeds.

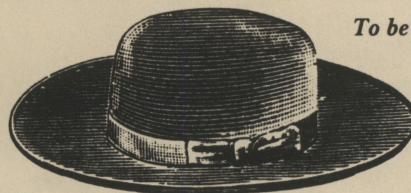
In 1937 all preliminary requirements for the formation of the Walnut Creek, Alamo, Danville, Lafayette Cemetery District were made. The formation of the proposed district . . . required the signatures of fifty-one percent of the qualified voters. . . . A committee was chosen: E. B. Anderson, Johnson Thomas, Walnut Creek; Alden Jones and Flora Jones, Alamo; Charles wood, C. E. Weister and Judge A. E. Clark, Danville; Mrs. R. E. McNeil, Mrs. C. S. McNeil, Roy R. Bunker and Mrs. M. J. B. Dewing, now Mrs. Rosenberg, of Lafayette. . . .

We have spoken of the cemetery, I think we can speak of several of our early settlers who are buried there. John Standish, an early American inventor, with his son Philander, who invented the Mayflower steam plow, settled in Lafayette in 1857. John Standish operated the flour mill started by Elam Brown in 1853. On top of the cemetery hill a large sandstone monument marks his resting place. On it you can read "John Standish. Inventor. Born in Pawtucket, R.I., Nov. 20, 1797. Died in Lafayette, Nov. 27, 1867. Aged 70 yr. 7 days."

The Standishes were direct descendants of Captain Miles Standish, who came to America in the Pilgrim Mayflower in 1620, a fact of which they were justly proud.

Nathaniel Jones, who was the first sheriff of Contra Costa County (1850-1852) and who later also served as Public Administrator and Supervisor, was buried in the northwest corner of the cemetery near the driveway. The headstone which marks his grave was placed there by the Native Sons of the Golden West.

The third grave of which I wish to speak is that of our first school teacher, the man who named Lafayette, the man who petitioned Congress to give us a post office, and the man who was our first postmaster, Benjamin Shreve. His grave is farther south near the driveway and for some time had no marker. His grandson, Horace Shreve, had a marker placed on his grave.



To be continued . . .

Lafayette Historical Society

POST OFFICE BOX 133 LAFAYETTE, CALIF. 94549

MEMBER INFORMATION

last name first name spouse's first name
street address phone number
city, state, zip code date

Annual dues: Please check appropriate line indicating amount of dues payable, attach your check in the amount shown — adding any contribution you can make toward the fire engine repair fund — and mail to **Lafayette Historical Society, P.O. Box 133, Lafayette, California 94549.**

___ Student membership - \$ 2.50	DUES	\$ <u>10.00</u>
___ Family membership - \$ 10.00	Contribution to help	
___ Business membership - \$ 50.00	maintain fire engine	
___ Life membership - \$100.00		

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ 10.⁰⁰

Please indicate your areas of special interest

☒ Archives
☐ Landmarks
☐ Fire engine
☐ Telephone committee
☐ Annual potluck dinner committee
☐ Research
☐ Other: _____

☐ Oral history
☐ Photograph collection
☐ Newspaper clippings
☐ Walking tours
☐ Displays

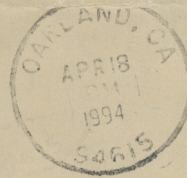
Upcoming Events of Interest

- April 21 Gen. Mtg. program on earthquake preparedness, Moraga Hist. Soc. Call 376-6708.
- May 10 LHS annual dinner meeting: Civil War Re-enactment program. Veterans Hall, Lafayette, 6pm.
- May 21 Day-trip to Bay Model Visitor Center in Sausalito, Moraga Hist. Soc., 8:30am-5pm, \$14. Call Jack Lindeman (376-9224).
- May 22 Annual meeting, Orinda Hist. Soc.
- Sept. 15-18..... "Remains to Be Seen: California History from Places and Things." Program of 1994 annual conf. of Calif. Hist. Soc. and Calif. Council for Promotion of History, Red Lion Hotel, San Diego. Call 415/567-1848 for info.
- May 28 Memorial Day celebration at Camp Stoneman Memorial Park, Harbor Street, Pittsburg. Call Marti Aiello (439-8730).
- Sept.30-Oct 2 Two-day program featuring speakers and workshops on a variety of subjects of interest to history buffs by the Northern Symposium of the Conference of California Historical Societies, Marriott Hotel, Walnut Creek (hosted by C.C. Co. Hist. Soc.) Call 939-9180 or 254-2295 for more info.



PHOTOGRAPH, above right: The big snow of 1923. The little boy is Rothery McKeegan. He is standing near the southeast corner of Plaza Park. Looking across the park, Thomson's blacksmith shop can be seen in the background where it faces present-day Mt. Diablo Boulevard, very near the site of the Bank of America building.

Lafayette Historical Society
P.O. Box 133
Lafayette, CA 94549



First Class Mail

Angela Broadhead
1152 Fairlawn Ct #2
Walnut Creek Ca 94595